

19 October 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: NSC Staff Request for Interagency Papers on
Panama and the Caribbean

1. In a meeting with Mr. David Lazar, the NSC staffer for Latin America on 14 October 1976, he requested that three interagency papers be prepared:

a. Panama: An appraisal of economic and political factors over the next 18-24 months. . An Interagency Intelligence Memorandum to be completed by 15 November 1976.

b. Panama: Memorandum to Holders, updating SNIE 84-1-75, to be completed the first week in January 1977.

c. Caribbean: Status of Political and Economic Evolution. Paper to be completed by the end of February 1977.

2. In addition to myself, the following were present at the meeting:

[redacted] of OCI/Caribbean, [redacted] DIO/LA; [redacted]
and [redacted] of ARA/Panama; Robert Allen and Harvey Lampert of INR.

3. The first two items were discussed when all participants were present. Mr. Lazar asked [redacted] and me to stay on after the others had left, at which time he asked our views on whether or not [redacted]

[redacted] He expressed his concern that [redacted] for information on Cuban exile organizations in the US two weeks before the crash of the Cubana aircraft, and [redacted] had supplied the requested information. I replied that I assumed [redacted] compliance with Wills' request had been orchestrated in Washington in an effort to improve official Guyanese attitudes toward the US. (Mr. Lazar had called me at the time requesting information on Cuban exile groups, and I referred him to the FBI.) Mr. Lazar went on to say that he felt it important to have a paper produced on the political and economic situation in the Caribbean so that the new administration in Washington would have an understanding of the situation.

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Mr. Lazar had no strong feelings about the art form to be used in presenting this interagency paper. He said he felt it should be published by the end of February 1977.

4. Concerning Panama, Mr. Lazar first sought a SNIE to be produced immediately. I pointed out that Panamanian attitudes concerning the Panama Canal treaty negotiations would be directly affected by the outcome of the US elections since President Ford and Governor Carter have divergent views on this subject. I said that I was sure that President Torrijos of Panama was currently reexamining his options in the event Governor Carter is elected on 2 November. I said that to update SNIE 84-1-75 at this time would be premature. [] suggested that an inter-agency memorandum on economic and political factors over the next 18-24 months. could be produced in the near term, with a Memorandum to Holders of SNIE 84-1-75 to be produced later. [] who is actively involved in Panama treaty negotiations, suggested that it might be useful if Ambassador Bunker were to brief the drafter of the IIM sometime after 25 October, when he returns from Panama. All agreed this would be helpful.

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5. It was agreed, therefore, that an IIM would be produced by 15 November and that the memorandum to Holders would be produced shortly after the first of the year.

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6. Yesterday, I wrote a memorandum to the Director, OCI, proposing that the Panama IIM be drafted by the Caribbean Branch of OCI. I think the Memorandum to Holders of SNIE 84-1-75 could be drafted by [] of the DIA Estimates office, and am exploring this with the DIO/LA now. The Caribbean interagency paper could be drafted either by INR or by [] in OCI, if the latter has time. I will resolve this shortly.

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A/NIO/LA

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